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STATE FOR NEA DAS RJSCHMIERER AND NEA/I ACBONSU

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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST - REPUBLIC OF KOREA PARTICIPATION
IN ERBIL RRT

REF: SECSTATE 125603

1. On December 4, poloff delivered reftel demarche to Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) Development Cooperation Division's Jong-ho Kyun. Below are responses to questions posed in reftel.

-- The ROK is planning to end participation in the RRT because their RRT members will be unprotected once the Zaytun Unit departs. The ROK's RRT members will depart on December 15 with the Zaytun Unit.

-- However, according to Kyun, the ROKG does not want to send the wrong signal to the GOI, so KOICA will stay. Kyun said that the ROK pledged to the GOI that KOICA would remain in Iraq until the end of 2011 or 2012, and the ROK plans to honor that pledge. KOICA staff will have two executive leaders, 1-2 support staff members, and contractors. Kyun noted that around 50 ROK citizens are planning to remain in Erbil, mostly contractors. Kyun confirmed that the annual budget is roughly \$10 million.

-- Because of the number of ROK citizens remaining, MOFAT will maintain a liason office in Erbil to tend to their needs. However, the liason office will not become a consulate, nor does MOFAT plan to establish one. Two diplomats will staff the liason office.

2. Kyun offered the following additional information.

-- The ROKG really has not thought through how their personnel in Erbil will be protected. He said that since the Koreans live in the same areas as the Amercians, they believe they are safe. Kyun, on the other hand, believed that the ROK will need to hire private security services to protect their staff.

-- Kyun frankly noted that he believed the ROK likely will maintain some presence in Erbil because Korean companies are interested in investing in oil and construction projects.
STEPHENS